DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 124 042 HE 007 886

AUTHOR Sullivan, Sandra M.
TITLE The Policy-Making Process of the State University System of Florida.
PUB DATE 21 Apr 76
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 21, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies (Education); Conference Reports; *Decision Making; Educational Administration; Educational Planning; Educational Policy; Flow Charts; *Governance; *Higher Education; Interviews; *Policy Formation; Politics; *State Universities; Stress Variables
IDENTIFIERS *Florida

ABSTRACT

The policy-making process of the State University System of Florida is described using David Easton's model of a political system as the conceptual framwork. Two models describing the policy-making process were developed from personal interviews with the primary participants in the governance structure and from three case studies of policy decisions made during the 1974 fiscal year by the Florida Board of Regents. The findings of the study supported the thesis that decision-making authority becomes more centralized under stress. The standard form of the SUS decision-making process was shown to collapse under stress, and the collapsed form of the process was shown to eliminate the formal participation of institutional representatives and of the university presidents as units within the formal decision-making structure. The research confirms the findings of other authors who have taken the position that the political model offers valuable insights into the dynamics of decision-making in academe. This study is an extension of previous research on academic governance and on the process through which interest groups influence policy decisions in higher education. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED124042

HE

THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Sandra M. Sullivan

Office of Institutional Research
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

HE 007 876

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 21, 1976.

Introduction

In 1939, thirty-three states had no state agency responsible for the coordination or governance of public institutions of higher education; however, by 1974, there were only three states which had no statewide agency (Van Dyne, 1974). According to Glenny (1972), current social, political, and economic trends indicate that higher education will increasingly come under the direction of state and regional planning boards. A similar conclusion was drawn by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) in its final report:

> Higher education . . . has never had less independence from public control, in all of American history . . . .
>
> The great change of the past decade was not the vociferous rise of student power but the quiet increase in public power--by governors, by legislators, by coordinating councils (p. 59).

The general trend of educational policy-making for public institutions is away from the campus toward the state level. The increased centralization of authority in state agencies has been acknowledged by the Newman Report (1971); Carnegie Commission (1972, 1973), and Chambers (1974). In the judgment of the Carnegie Commission (1973), the shift in authority is related to the advent of statewide coordination and of multicampus systems. Clark Kerr has suggested that studies related to the academic governance of multicampus systems are an area of scholarly neglect because the focus of research has remained at the campus level (Lee and Bowen, 1971, p. xi.)

By the end of the 1960s, the literature reflected that higher education had entered a period of crisis in which new perspectives were needed to explain the internal and external problems of university governance (Graubard and Ballotti, 1970; Kammerer, 1969). Baldridge (1971a) compiled and edited a book on academic governance in which he offered the political model as an alternative model for understanding the dynamics of decision-making. He used research

material drawn from sociology, social psychology, and administrative theory to interpret academic governance as a "political" process, i.e., "the interaction of various academic interest groups as they try to shape and mold the destiny of the university" (p. 1).

The literature of the 1970s indicated an increasing recognition of the appropriateness of viewing academic governance as a political process and of using the analytical tools of political science to investigate areas other than public government. Epstein (1974), applying political inquiry to university governance, defended the application of political science models and concepts to the study of educational structures and the decision-making processes of governance. Summarizing the existing literature on political inquiry into academic governance, Epstein observed that Baldridge's Power and Conflict in the University (1971b) appeared to be the best known application of a political process model to study a particular university's decision-making. Another model, the Easton model for the analysis of political systems, had been suggested earlier by Immegart and Pilerki (1973) as a viable framework for analyzing political behavior within educational systems.

A review of the literature revealed that Easton's model had been used previously to describe the formulation of educational policy. The earliest study found was made by Scribner (1966) who adapted Easton's model to the study of policy formulation and decision-making by a local public school board. In another study Consins (1969) used Easton's model to analyze the formulation of educational policy by a state legislature. Later Sevey (1971) applied the model to a study of the policy-making process of a state board of education, and Finlay (1972) described the policy-making process in "an American university" using Easton's model as a conceptual framework. Based on the research

findings of these authors, a study of the policy-making process of a multi-campus system of higher education, using Easton's model of a political system, was viewed as an important extension of previous research.

General Description of the State University System of Florida (SUS)

The State University System of Florida is a multicampus system consisting of nine universities. The SUS is governed by the Florida Board of Regents. The present board of regents consists of nine members, appointed by the governor to serve nine-year terms. The board is primarily a policy-making board, and its responsibilities include the determination of the role and scope of each university, the development of policies governing the activities of the universities, the establishment and placement of degree programs, and the preparation of an annual budget request for submission to the legislature.

The board of regents employs a board staff to oversee the operation of the multicampus system. The board staff numbers nearly 100 employees, among whom are a chancelor, vice chancellors, a corporate secretary, professional educators, technical assistants, and secretarial personnel. The staff is the work force through which the chancellor administers the daily activities of the SUS. The chancellor is responsible for advising the regents on all educational matters, supervising studies and reports prepared by the board staff, and making policy recommendations to the board.

Each of the nine universities of the SUS is administered by a president. To obtain input from the universities on policy matters and to maintain orderly communication between the universities and the central office (BOR), a system of interinstitutional councils and committees was established by the regents. The role of the presidents in the formulation of SUS policy is formally through the council of presidents. Through the council, the presidents represent the interests of their respective institutions on matters of systemwide concern.

As chairman of the council, the chancellor transmits its recommendations, together with his own recommendations, to the board of regents for appropriate action.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the policy-making process of the State University System of Florida, using Easton's model of a political system as a conceptual framework. The policy-making process involves the description of the formal decision-making structure of the SUS and the identification of environmental influences directly related to shaping policies of the SUS.

Two research techniques were used to collect the data: (1) the research interview method, and (2) the case study method. These two independent methods of data gathering were selected so that it would be possible to compare the description of the policy-making process developed from the interview data with the description of the policy-making process developed from the case study data for congruency.

An interview schedule was designed to obtain a description of the policy-making process of the SUS from the primary individuals who officially participate in the formal decision-making of the SUS. The questions in the interview schedule were developed from the political model set forth by Easton (1965a; 1965b). Twenty-four persons were invited to participate in the formal interviews and to respond to the questions in the interview schedule: 9 regents, 6 board staff members, and 9 university presidents. Interviews were conducted with 6 regents, 6 board staff members, and 8 university presidents.

Three policy decisions made by the Florida Board of Regents were selected as the case studies for this investigation. Each decision was made within the

same budgetary period, the 1974 fiscal year. The persons participating in the formal decision-making structure of the SUS as regents, board staff members, and presidents were the same for each of the three selected case studies. The case studies were developed by examining official documents related to each policy decision and by interviewing board staff members responsible for developing the policy recommendation submitted to the board of regents for approval. Narrations of these case studies were submitted to the appropriate board staff member for review and certification of the accuracy of the information presented.

Discussion of Findings

Eleven groups were identified by the interview participants as interest groups influencing the policy-making process (see Table 1). The interview participants emphasized that the interest groups which became involved in influencing the policy-making process of the SUS varied with the nature of the policy decisions. The three factors which were identified as measures of an interest group's (or individual's) ability to exert influence on the policy-making process of the system were: (1) the accuracy and amount of information available to the interest group, (2) the degree to which the interest group organizes its campaign, and (3) the strength of the constituency serving as the support base of the interest group.

The data used to develop the narratives of the three case studies were analyzed to identify the interest groups who interacted with the SUS during the policy-making process represented in each case study. It was possible to classify the interest groups identified within the case studies according to the list of groups identifed by the interview participants as influencing the policy-making process of the SUS (see Table 2).

TABLE 1

INTEREST GROUPS INFLUENCING THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS OF THE SUS

Interest Group Categories	Example of Interest Group
Board Staff	SUS Office of Administrative Affairs
Presidents	SUS Council of Presidents
Faculties	SUS Interinstitutional Faculty Council
Staff	SUS Interinstitutional Committee on Registrars and Admissions Officers
Students	SUS Council of Student Body Presidents
Federal Government Agencies	U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
State Government Agencies	Florida Department of Administration
Florida Legislature	House Appropriations Committee
Professional Associations and Organizations	Florida Medical Association
Private Interest Group	United Faculty of Florida
Public Interest Group	Orlando Chamber of Commerce

TABLE 2

INTEREST GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE STUDIES
CLASSIFIED WITHIN THE ELEVEN GROUPS
PRESENTED IN TABLE 1

Interest Group Categories (Table 1)	Case Number	Case Study Interest Groups
1. Board Staff	1	Academic Affairs
	2,3	Administrative Affairs
	1,2,3	Chancellor's Office
2. Presidents	1,2	Council of Presidents
	1,2,3	Individual Presidents
3. Faculties	1	FSU Faculty Senate
4. Staff	1,2,3	SUS Interinstitutional Committees
5. Students	2	Council of Student Body Presidents
6. Federal Government Agencies	3	Office for Civil Rights (HEW)
7. State Government Agencies	1,3	Department of Education
	3	Governor's Office
	3	State Board of Education
8. Florida Legislature	1,3	Senate Ways and Means Committee
	2,3	House Appropriations Committee
	1,2	Senate Education Committee
	1,2	House Education Committee
9. Professional Associations and Organizations	1	State Association of English Professors
10. Private Interest Groups	3	National FAMU Alumni Association
	3	Florida FAMU Alumni Association
	3	Concerned Citizens of Florida
	3	Black Coalition for Education
	3	Florida Black Leadership Conference
11. Public Interest Groups	3	Statewide Monitoring and Review Committee

Particular individuals were also identified by the interview participants as highly influential in the policy-making process of the SUS. The eleven persons cited most frequently in the interviews as being highly influential were (1) the chancellor of the SUS, (2) the governor of Florida, (3) the commissioner of education, (4) the director of the state budget, (5) the state attorney general, (6) the president of the Florida Senate, (7) the speaker of the Florida House, (8) the chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, (9) the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and (11) the chairman of the House Education Committee.

The individual within the internal environment of the SUS identified in the interviews as the person exerting the most influence on SUS policy decisions was the chancellor. The individual in the external environment of the SUS identified as the person capable of exerting the most influence on the SUS policy decisions was the governor. Three other individuals external to the SUS were also cited as particularly influential. They were the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House, and the chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

An examination of the case study data indicated that each one of the state officials and legislators identified in the interview data as influential appeared in one or more of the case studies with the exception of the chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, the director of the budget, and the state attorney general. Table 3 presents a listing of the persons who acted deliberately to influence the policy decisions in each case study.

The interview participants were unanimous in stating that interest groups and individuals acted deliberately to influence policy decisions. Two patterns of exerting influence to shape policy decisions were identified in the interviews. An interest group (or individual) can act to exert influence on the SUS policy-making process from within the SUS by focusing its efforts at the

TABLE 3

INDIVIDUALS WHO DELIBERATELY ACTED TO INFLUENCE THE POLICY DECISION IN EACH CASE STUDY

Person or Title	Case Study
Governor of Florida	2,3
Commissioner of Education	1,3
Director of the Budget	--
State Attorney General	--
President of the Senate	3
Speaker of the House	3
Chairman, Senate Ways and Means Committee	--
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee	2,3
Chairman, Senate Education Committee	1,2,3
Chairman, House Education Committee	1,2
Chancellor and Board Staff Members	1,2,3
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	1
Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs	2,3
State University Presidents	1,2,3
Faculty Senate Leaders	1
SUS Student Leaders	2
Alumni Representatives	3
Private Citizens	1,3

board staff level, or from without the SUS by directing its attention to the legislature. In the opinion of many of the respondents, acting through the legislature is the most powerful channel through which to influence the SUS policy-making process.

Two forms of the formal decision-making process of the SUS were developed from the interview data. Figure 1 illustrates the standard form of the formal decision-making process. There is a SUS interaction pattern associated with the formal decision-making structure which represents the pattern of communication between the decision-making units during the processing of a policy decision. The interaction pattern between the units is represented by the broken, two-tailed arrows <----> , drawn as connecting lines between the appropriate units. The flow of a policy decision and the policy recommendations developed within the units is shown by directional arrows ——→ .

A second form of the policy-making process occurs when the board of regents must make a policy decision under time contraints which do not allow sufficient time to process the policy through the standard form. Figure 2 illustrates the "collapsed" form of the decision-making process. Usually stress upon the decision-making process occurs in response to an externally imposed deadline; however, stress also results if a policy decision is, or becomes, highly controversial and generates a high level of interaction between the SUS and its environment.

In both forms of the policy-making process, there is an environmental-SUS interaction pattern which cannot be illustrated because the pattern varies with the policy decision under consideration. However, the degree of interaction between the SUS and its environment was said to be dependent upon two factors: (1) the nature of the policy decision, i.e., the degree of controversy associated with a decision, and (2) the number of individuals affected by the output of the policy-making process.

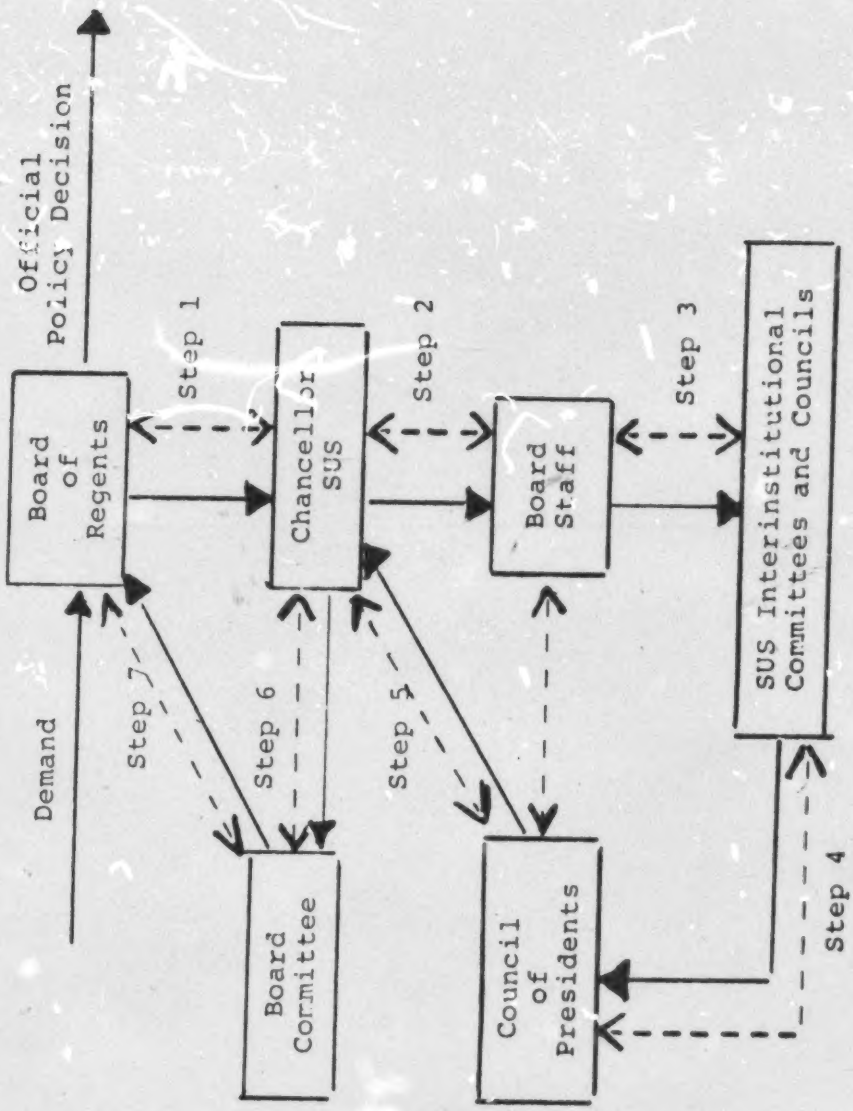


Fig. 1. The Standard Form of the Formal Decision-making Process

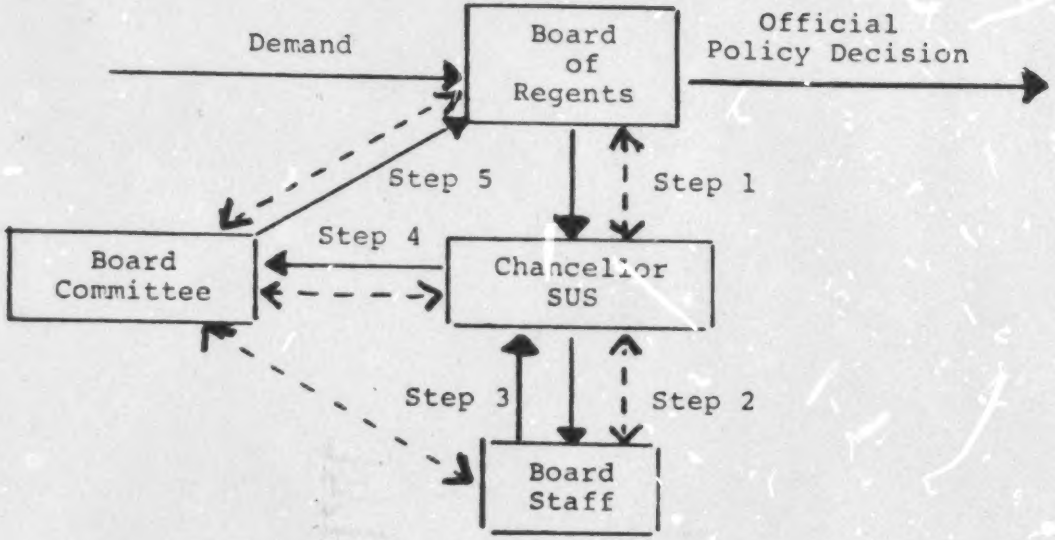
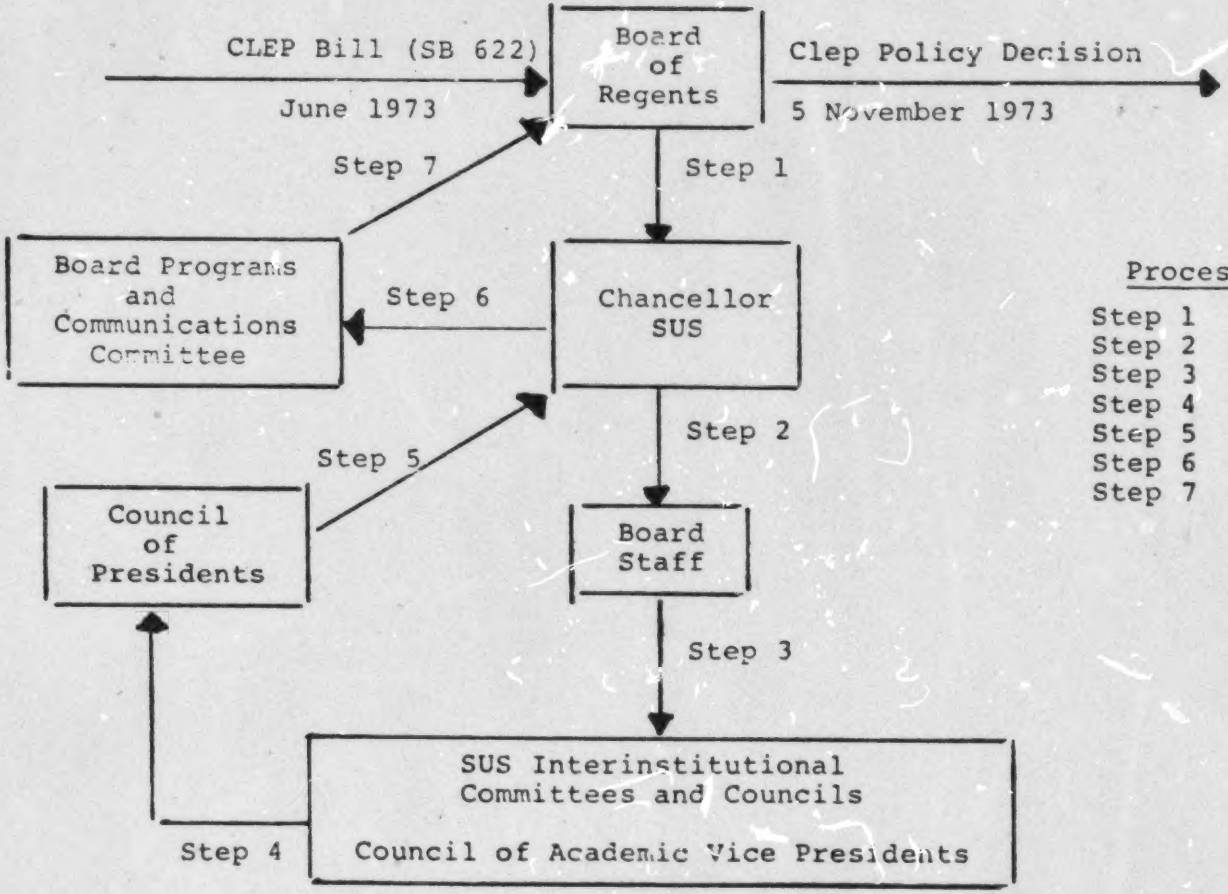


Fig. 2. The Collapsed Form of the Formal Decision-making Process

There appears to be a higher degree of interaction between the SUS and the environment with the collapsed form of the decision-making process than with the standard form. The increase is partially created by the board staff seeking input through informal interaction with the internal environment of the system instead of the input being built into the formal decision-making units as it is in the standard form. The collapsed form places interest groups, both internal to the SUS and external to the SUS, within the environmental-SUS interaction pattern.

Based upon the case study data, a model of the formal decision-making process was developed for each case study. The decision-making process revealed in Case Study I (Figure 3) corresponded to the standard form of the formal decision-making process developed from the interveiw data (Figure 1); the decision-making process revealed in Case Study III (Figure 5) corresponded to the collapsed form of the formal decision-making process (Figure 2); and, the decision-making process revealed in Case Study II (Figure 4) appeared to be an intermediate form of the standard and collapsed form. Comparing the models developed from the research interview data with those developed from the case studies suggested that the standard form and the collapsed form of the formal decision-making process as presented in Figures 1 and 2 are an accurate representation of the formal decision-making structure of the SUS.

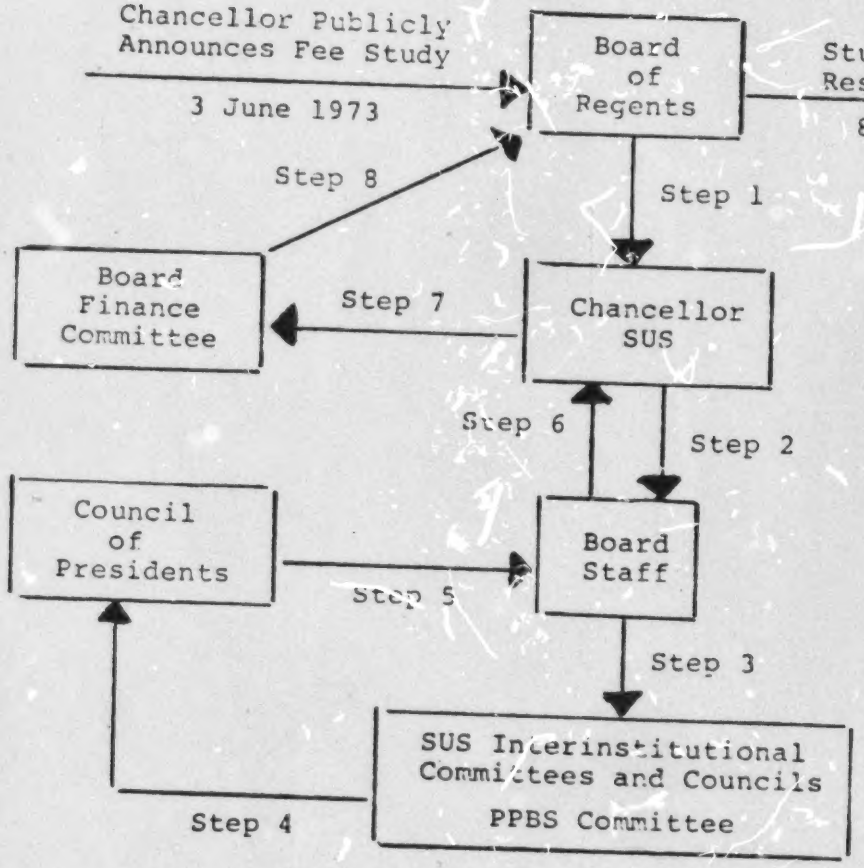
In order to examine the policy-making process of the SUS, a second set of models was developed from the case study data, relating the environmental-SUS interaction pattern for each case to the formal deicision-making process of the SUS. The models are presented in Figures 6, 7, and 8. The environmental-SUS interaction pattern revealed in Case Study III (Figure 8) is far more complex than that indicated in Case Study I (Figure 6), and the environmental-SUS interaction pattern in Case Study II (Figure 7) appeared more complex than in Case Study I



Process Dates

Step 1	Summer 1973
Step 2	Summer 1973
Step 3	Summer 1973
Step 4	October 1973
Step 5	October 1973
Step 6	October 1973
Step 7	November 1973

Fig. 3. Case Study I: The Formal Decision-making Process



Process Dates

Step 1	June 1973
Step 2	Summer 1973
Step 3	Fall 1973
Step 4	January 1974
Step 5	February 1974
Step 6	March 1974
Step 7	March 1974
Step 8	April 1974

Fig. 4. Case Study II: The Formal Decision-making Process

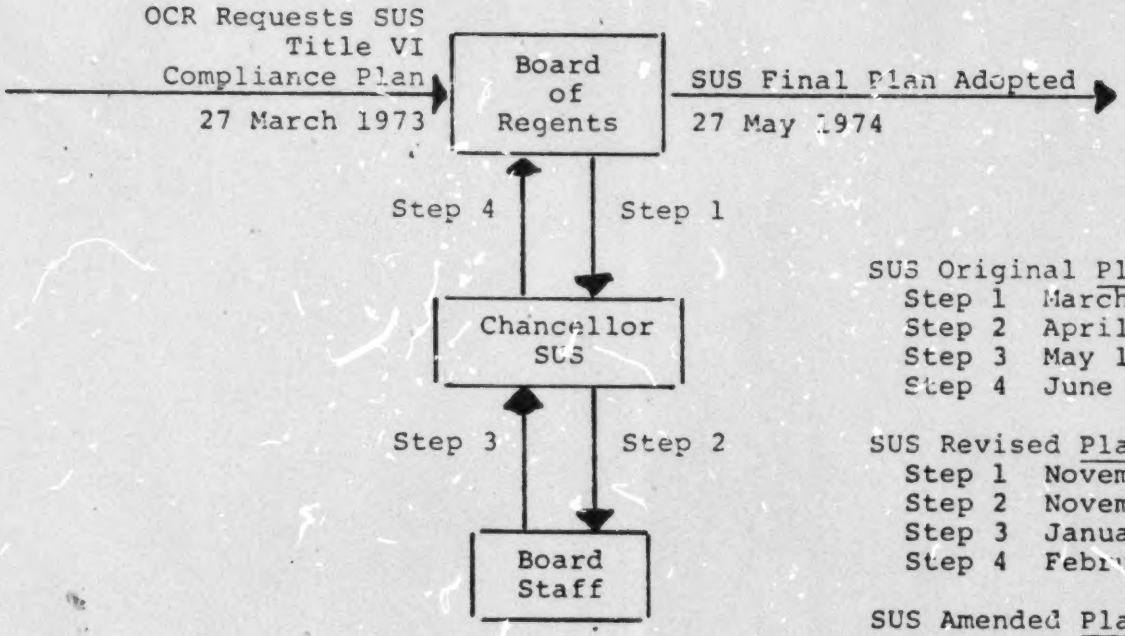


Fig. 5. Case Study III: The Formal Decision-making Process

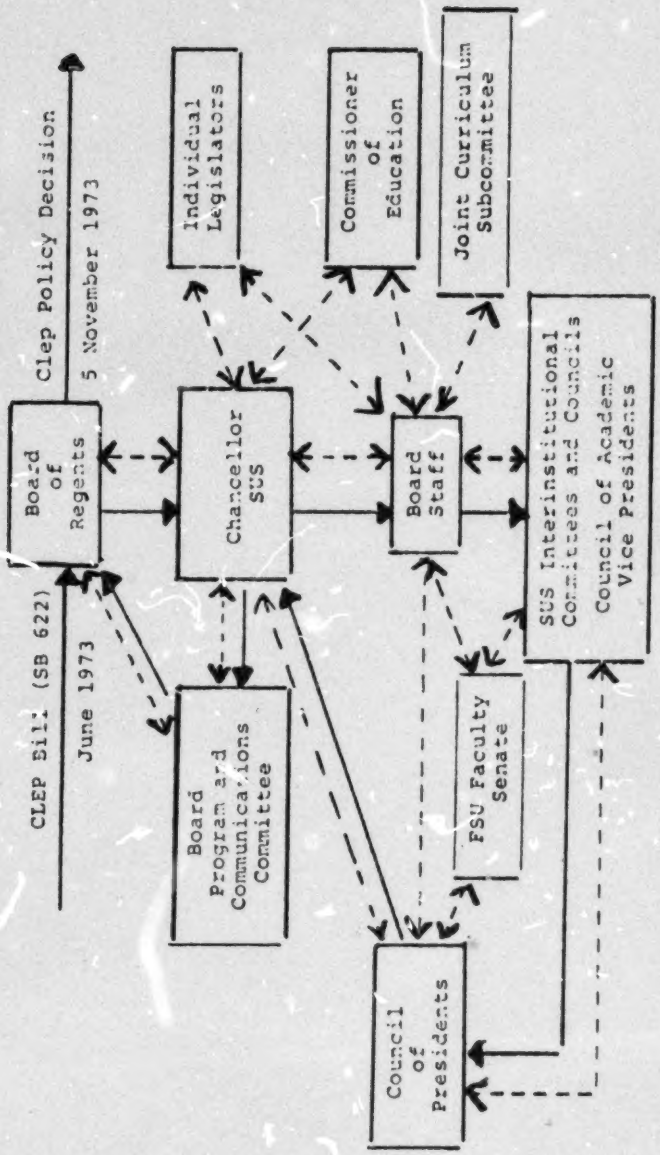


Fig. 6. Case Study I: The Policy-Making Process of the SUS

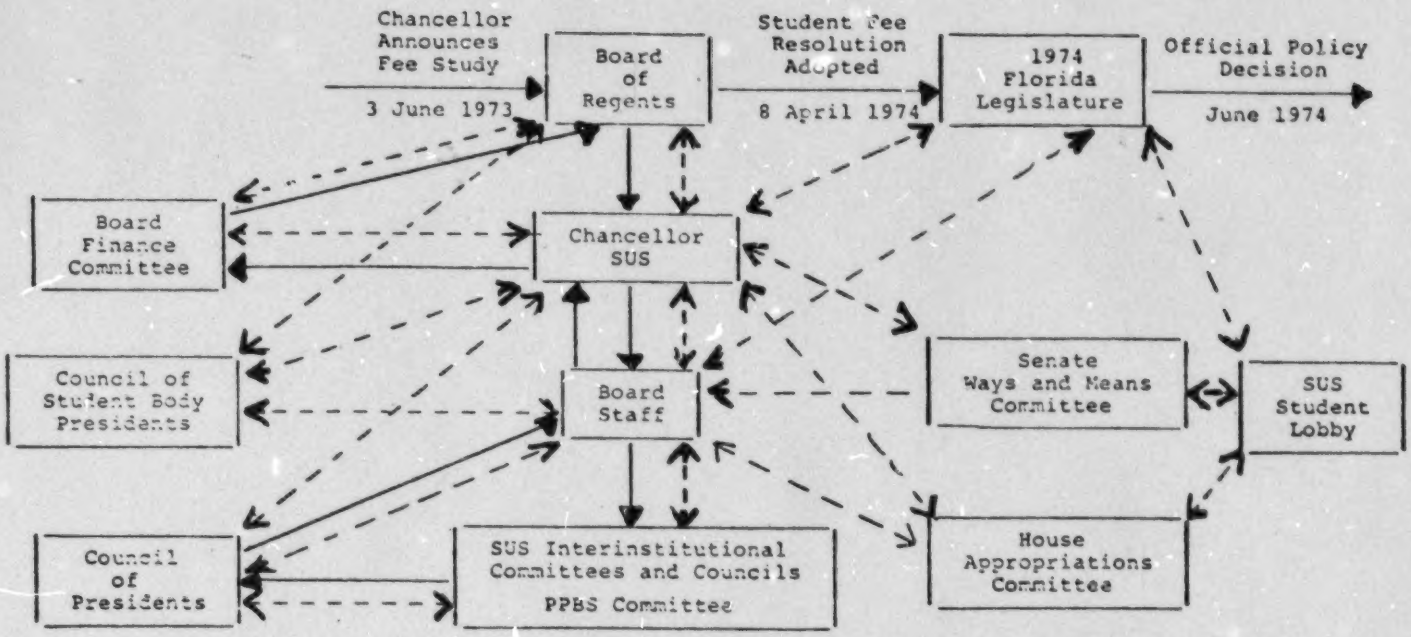


Fig. 7. Case Study II: The Policy-making Process of the SUS

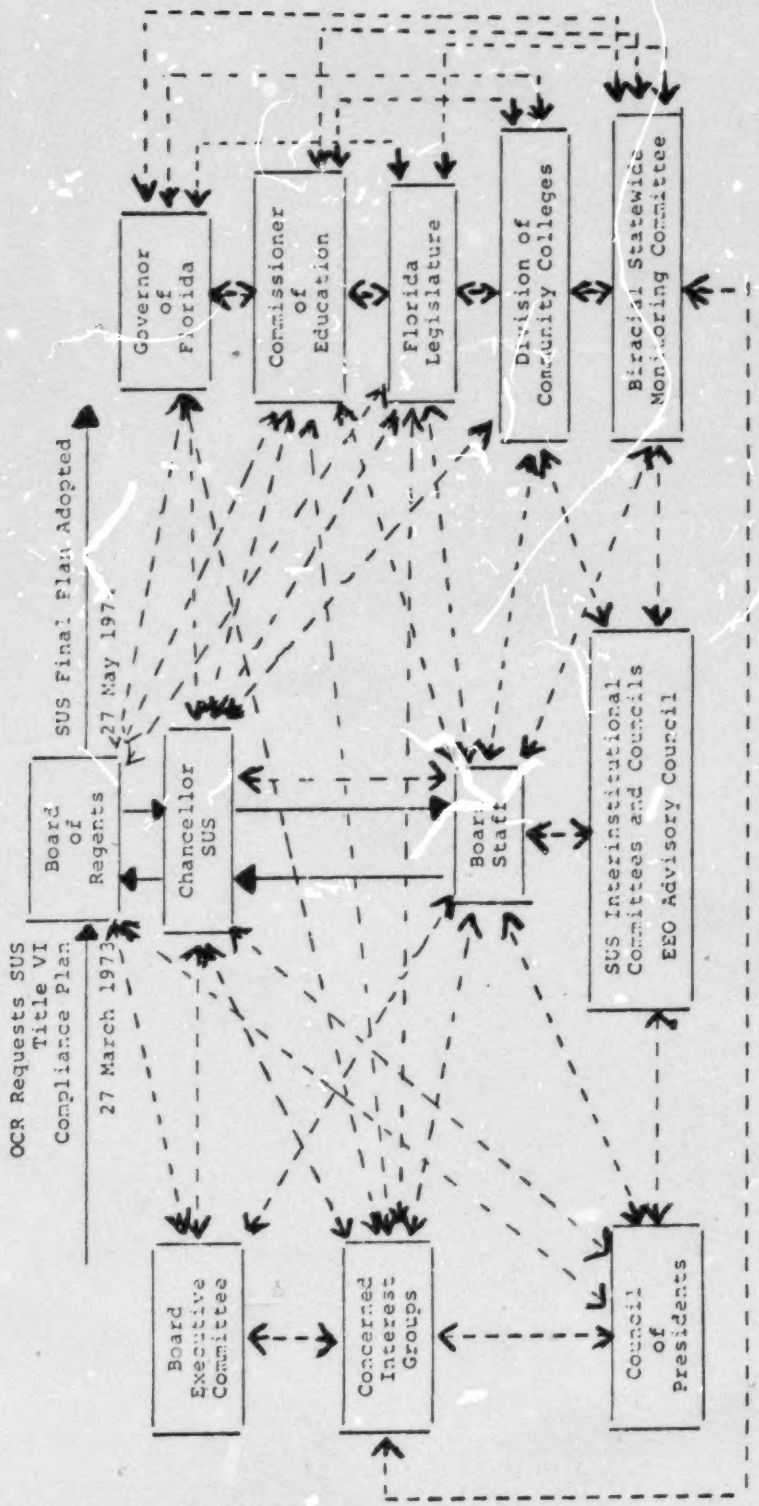


Fig. 8. Case Study III: The Policy-making Process of the SUS

and less complexed than in Case Study III. The results again supported the earlier observation that Case Study II was an intermediate form of the policy-making process depicted by Case Study I and by Case Study III.

There was evidence in both Case Study II and III that the SUS was under direct stress to act during the policy-making process, and that the degree of stress was greater in Case Study III than in Case Study II. This evidence supports the implied relationship between the form of the model and the collapse of the standard form of the model under stress.

In comparing the role of the board of regents as the governing body of the SUS to the role of the authorities within a political system, the SUS was considered independently from the more comprehensive governmental system of the department of education and the state of Florida. The SUS was examined using Easton's model to identify the elements of his model which correspond to the SUS. The parts of the Easton model are (1) an environment to which the system responds, (2) inputs in the form of demands and support, (3) outputs in the form of decisions and actions, and (4) a feedback loop.

Earlier this study showed that the SUS responded to demands originating from two sources: (1) the formal decision-making units and personnel employed within the SUS, and (2) the interest groups and individuals external to the SUS. Administrators, faculty members, students, and staff within the SUS would fall within the first "source" category; all other persons and interest groups, such as the legislature, the governor, and the federal government would fall within the second "source" category. Since Easton (1965) defines the environment of a political system as "the influences to which the political system is exposed and in turn reacts" (p. 18), Easton's definition of the environment appears applicable to the sources identified as the internal and external environment of the SUS.

Applying Easton's concepts of "inputs," "outputs," and "feedback loop" to the conceptualization of the SUS, the inputs from the environment represent the demands brought to the attention of the SUS for processing and the environmental influences accompanying these demands which support and mold their consideration. The final policy decision made by the board of regents and the implementation of that decision represent the outputs of the SUS. Finally, the feedback loop is the flow of information back and forth between the SUS and its environment during the policy-making process. In Figure 9 Easton's dynamic response model of a political system (Easton, 1965) was adapted to describe the State University System of Florida. Easton's model was found to be a useful framework for analysis of the policy-making process of the SUS.

Implications of the Study

The application of a political model to describe the policy-making process of an educational system allows the process to be viewed as a system of interrelated behaviors between interest groups and individuals deliberately acting to influence the shaping of policy decisions made by those persons having formal authority for the governance of the system. The dynamic characteristic of the political model highlights the importance of the environmental/system interaction pattern which occurs during the policy-making process and allows the shaping of policy to be viewed as a total process. The findings of this research support the position taken by other researchers that Easton's model of a political system is relevant to the educational administrator in better understanding the political aspects of decision-making.

The development of the models describing the policy-making process of the SUS demonstrate the centralization of decision-making which occurs with state systems of education. Based on the roles played by the chancellor and the university presidents, there is a reduction in the autonomy of the

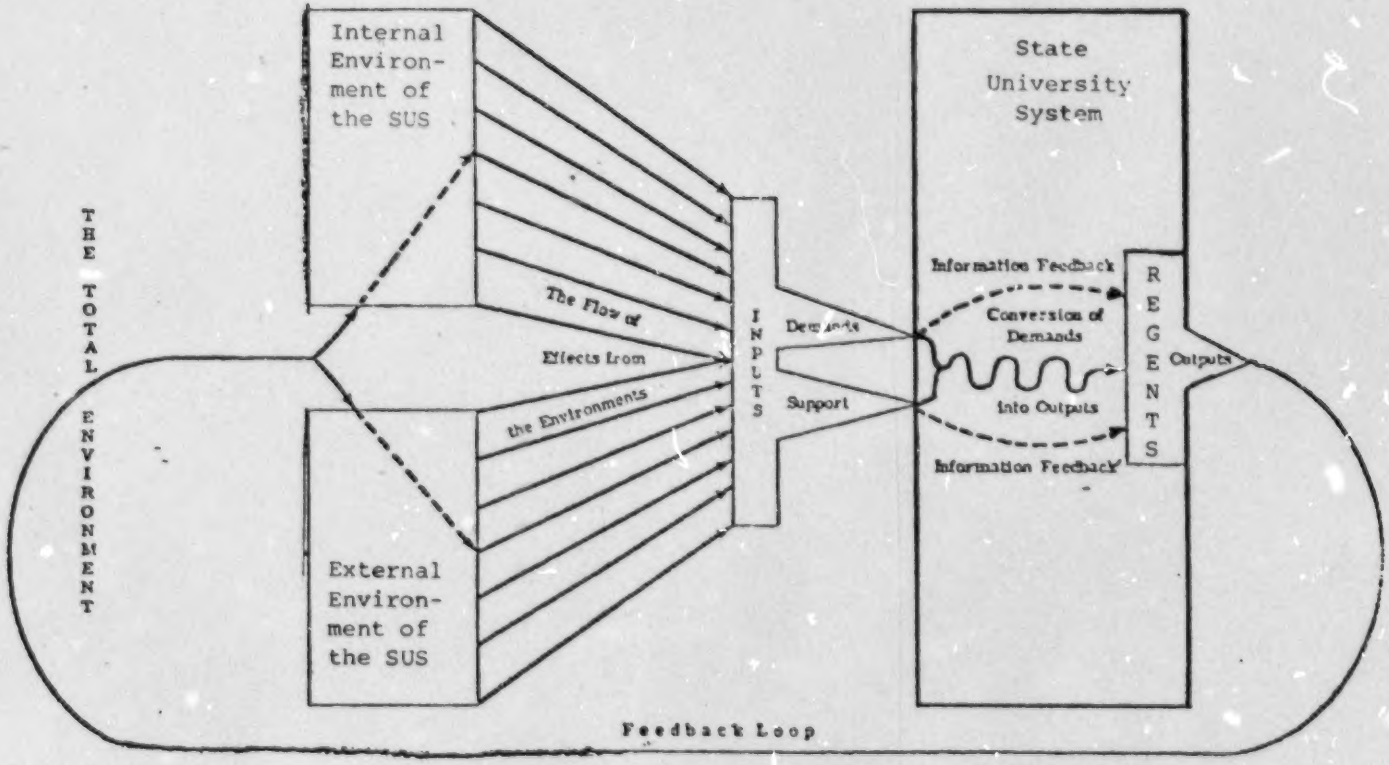


Fig. 9. A Dynamic Response Model of the State University System of Florida

individual institution and in the authority of the institutional president when the final policy decisions are made at the state level. Also it is apparent that external interest groups and persons, such as the legislature and the governor, assume an influential role in the governance of state systems.

An important finding of this study is the effect that "stress" has upon the policy-making process and its relationship to other environmental factors. Specifically, those factors which are identified as somehow related to stress are the time period in which a decision must be made and the environmental/system interaction pattern. As the time period decreases and the environmental/system interaction pattern increases, the stress factor felt by the system seems to increase and the form of the decision-making process collapses into a more centralized form. If further research were to demonstrate a direct relationship between stress and the collapsed form of the decision-making process, it would confirm the finding of this study that under stress, the policy-making process is focused at the central staff level of the educational system. The collapsed form of the decision-making process places the universities in a competitive role with all other interest groups seeking to influence the final policy decisions. The findings of this study add further credence to the belief expressed by Immegart and Pilecki (1973):

> The Easton model pinpoints the importance of the concept of "support" as in input of the political process. Since demands are negotiated in an arena of scarce resources, and since not all demands on a political system can be met, support for demands is a strategic necessity. Educators cannot go alone to the political arena with their demands (or wishes) and hope that logic and their professional competence will ensure that the demands are met.

References

Baldridge, J. Victor, ed. Academic Governance: Research on Institutional Politics and Decision-making. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1971a.

_____. Power and Conflict in the University: Research in the Sociology of Complex Organizations. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971b.

Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Governance of Higher Education: Six Priority Problems. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

_____. The More Effective Use of Resources: An Imperative for Higher Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

_____. Priorities for Action: Final Report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Chambers, M. M. Higher Education and State Governments. Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Easton, David. A Framework for Political Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965a.

_____. The Political System. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.

_____. A Systems Analysis of Political Life. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965b.

Epstein, Leon D. Governing the University. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974.

Glenny, Lyman A. "Trends are Impelling Higher Education Toward State and Regional Planning." College and University Business 53 (May 1973): 43-48.

Grauberd, Stephen R., and Ballotti, Geno A., eds. The Embattled University. New York: George Braziller, 1970.

Immegart, Glenn L., and Pilechi, Francis J. An Introduction to Systems for the Educational Administrator. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1973.

Kammerer, Gladys M. "The State University as a Political System." The Journal of Politics 31 (May 1969): 289-310.

Lee, Eugene C., and Bowen, Frank M. The Multicampus University: A Study of Academic Governance. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Report on Higher Education. By Frank Newman, Chairman. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Van Dyne, Larry. "The Changing Face of Governance in Public Higher Education." Compact 8 (September/October 1974): 9-11.

Unpublished Manuscripts

Consins, Roy J. "A Political Systems Approach to the Study of Senate Bill 311 in the 1967 Session of the California State Legislature." Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School and University Center, 1969.

Finlay, Kenneth W. "Policy Development in an American University: A description of a Political Process." Ph.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1972.

Scribner, Jay D. "A Functional-Systems Analysis of School Board Performance." Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1966.

Sevey, Richard E. "A Political Systems Analysis of a State Board of Education." Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University School of Education, 1971.

Sullivan, Sandra M. "A Description of the Policy-making Process of the State University System of Florida." Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1975.